



# 6th Engineer Battalion

## From the Commander National Training Center Rotation (03-29 Jul 10)

Hello Arctic Sappers!

Its been an outstanding month for the Battalion at home and abroad. What a great way for Gayle and I to come into the unit and learn what an incredible organization, exceptional families, and stalwart Soldiers we are blessed with. Our deployed 23rd Sappers in Afghanistan have done an exceptional job finding and defeating the attempts of the enemy to attack our forces with improvised explosive devices. They traveled with a photo journalist for 14 days and his images have captured the daily life of our Sappers and shared them with the nation. Photos of our Sappers in action have been posted on Sacbee at <http://blogs.sacbee.com/photos/2010/07/searching-for-ied-in-afghanist.html>, on USA Today at [http://www.usatoday.com/news/military/2010-07-11-IED\\_N.htm](http://www.usatoday.com/news/military/2010-07-11-IED_N.htm) and on Military Times at <http://www.militarytimes.com/frontline/index.php?count=3&date=2010%2F07%2F07#photo>

At the National Training Center, despite temperatures averaging 115 degrees in the California desert, the Battalion embraced a huge mission and excelled. We assumed command of two additional engineer companies, the 34th Sappers from Hawaii and the 59th Mobility Augmentation Company from Ft Hood, and simultaneously conducted both Route Clearance and Construction Operations. Route Clearance is a new possible mission to the Arctic Sappers but you never would have guessed it as our Soldiers outperformed all other engineers in the rotation. The 84th ESC (ABN) had platoons building roads, conducting

route clearance missions, and sanitizing routes with heavy equipment to prevent IED emplacements all at the same time! The Forward Support Company handled long distance logistics superbly as the battalion fought simultaneously from two different bases and maintained a slew of unfamiliar route clearance equipment to keep our guys on mission.

Back in AK, the 56th Engineers jumped into the building season by completing the construction of a series of buildings in the Engineer Skills Training Area, received several new back hoe loaders, a long awaited equipment improvement, and planned to deploy north to Fort Greeley in August for several construction missions.

And through all this incredible work, the family readiness group has stood firm, providing its unyielding support. In preparation for NTC, families participated in deployment training, supported a casualty scenario exercise coordinated with the unit at NTC, and even found time to support the Arctic Thunder Air Show.

If you haven't found it yet, the Battalion now has a Facebook page that we are actively updating with information, events and pictures



LTC Marc Hoffmeister

of

our team at work. We encourage everyone to become a fan. The page is at <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Fort-Richardson-AK/6th-Engineer-Battalion-CombatAirborne-Arctic-Sappers/133069323381604?ref=sgm>.

I'd like to thank everyone for all the hardwork this month...you all inspire and motivate me. Keep up the awesome work!

Arctic Sappers...Clear the Line!

LTC Marc Hoffmeister  
Arctic Sapper 6



ARCTICSAPPERS... CLEAR THE LINE!

## US Army

28 July 2010

### Commander

LTC Marc Hoffmeister

### Command Sergeant Major

CSM James Dickens

### Inside this issue:

<i>HHC</i>	2
<i>FSC</i>	3
<i>84th ESC</i>	6
<i>56th Eng</i>	7
<i>34th Sappers</i>	8
<i>59th MAC</i>	9



# HHC



## First NTC Rotation a Success for HHC

After seeing dark night skies for the first time in several months, Headquarters and Headquarters Company (HHC) hit the ground running at Fort Irwin, otherwise known as the National Training Center (NTC). Only hours after landing in Southern California and taking a 90 minute bus ride to Fort Irwin, HHC was busy preparing for its subsequent deployment to "The Box." As mentioned in previous emails to the HHC FRG, the biggest shocker to all was the heat. When the company left Alaska, the temperature in Anchorage was about 55 degrees. The first day at NTC was well over 100 degrees. Needless to say, the Soldiers could not drink enough water and Gatorade. However, the Company did not let the heat stop them. The Soldiers quickly began to acclimatize and went to work drawing vehicles, receiving equipment, setting up computers, running internet cable, processing personnel actions, set-

ting up an aid station, and completing all the big and small tasks required of an HHC to provide command and control to the subordinate Companies. Included below are comments from the various sections assigned to HHC:

- CPT Mike Steele

Although faced with the challenge of a 60% shortage in the field, the S1 was able to successfully track and account for five geographically dispersed Companies located on five different FOBs. Throughout the rotation, the S1 processed actions, evaluations, awards, replacements, maintained personnel accountability and conducted casualty operations. We value the lessons learned and will implement them in our shop.

- SGT Itagia Iosua

The 6<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion Unit Ministry Team (UMT) has spent this NTC rotation



**SGT Zeno gives two big thumbs up to the staff for a great rotation!**

on the move. We have gone on several convoys in order to spend as much time with the Soldiers as possible and even spent time on the lanes for blank and live fire. In between, the Chaplain was actively engaged in one-on-one time with Soldiers. We also provided religious services and conducted Bible studies. We were very pleased to have the time to practice what we love to do, and that is spend time with our Sappers.

- SGT Jonathan Zeno

## Battalion S2: Intelligence Support to Full Spectrum Engineer Operations

It is often difficult to fully exercise the Battalion S2 section without actually being deployed in combat. However, the National Training Center (NTC) was as realistic as it gets. The S2 section was able to exercise the full range of its functions and responsibilities, actively tracking the enemy and providing assessments that supported friendly operations. The Soldiers of the S2 section were eager to do the job they had signed up for. Intelligence analysts in the S2 section spent countless hours examining data, determining trends, reading reports, and coordinating with various battlefield enablers

*"Working in the S2 section is a lot of responsibility because the lives of Soldiers depend on the analysis and information you provide them" - SPC Kyle Vest*

to deliver a clear picture of the enemy situation. Ultimately, intelligence is the basis for all combat operations. Without intelligence, operations risk being unfocused or ineffective. The work of the S2 section is unique because of the uncertainty that is inherent on any battlefield. Intelligence analysts deal with a lot of

assumptions, uncorroborated information, and unknowns about the operational environment. "Working in the S2 section is a lot of responsibility because the lives of Soldiers depend on the analysis and information you provide them," says SPC Kyle Vest, an intelligence analyst in the S2 section.

- CPT James Kwoun

## Command Security Detachment New Role for Arctic Sappers

The 6<sup>th</sup> EN BN CSD was created to transport and secure key leaders on the battlefield, augment QRF in the event of a critical incident, and fulfill the commitment to never leave a fallen comrade. In order to accomplish this diverse mission set, Soldiers from across the battalion were chosen to provide various skills and experience. Created just prior to NTC 10-08, the entire team was not formed until the end of RSOI week, just before movement to "the box" to begin training.



**PFC A. Garcia pulls security during a patrol.**

Over the next two weeks, the CSD was able to develop and validate TTPs while executing continuous operations, focusing on their primary mission of securing key leaders during battlefield circulation. 2LT Sam Dia,

platoon leader for the CSD, said of the experience, "It's been a fun and challenging adventure each and every day and night. The best part was seeing the guys learn and grow with every mission they went out on."



# FSC



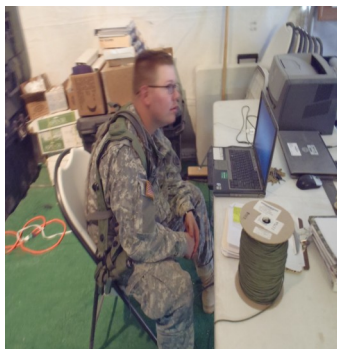
## Driving Forces of Maintenance Platoon- NTC Rotation 10-08

**SGT Eales** proved to be a go-getter for the month-long exercise. Wherever productivity was in effect, this NCO was involved. He helped in the tactical staging and set up of Motorpool operations as soon as boots were on ground. On week two, he conducted generator classes for 33 maintenance Soldiers. Although his specialty is generators, SGT Eales was actively involved in four convoys, supporting 84th Engineers route clearance operations and escorting fuel assets to another installation for greater than 37 rugged miles. He exhibited proficiency in mounted land navigation through the rocky and arid terrain in an effort to avoid the enemy.

### The Commo Crew

Vital to any army is the ability to communicate. With the distances between FOBs and the elevation of mountains, radio and internet signaling fostered challenges.

Our communication specialists stayed on top of any problems which arose. SPC McGrath, SPC Matuse, SGT Hartford, and SGT Thomas make up the Commo section. Below, SPC McGrath troubleshoots a network problem at our Company Headquarters.



Standing at the draw yard ready to receive vehicles and equipment for the mission



### Promotion in the sands of Southern California

*Upon entering Fort Irwin, a mound of boulders stack up to be an impressive landmark. Units past and present have left their insignia.*



## All in a Day's Work

The Maintenance Platoon has been engaged since day one. With 24 hour operations, they were able turn jobs around just as quick as they were submitted. On top of their daily duties, the Soldiers rotated turns on convoys. These are top Soldiers.



### 2LT Benjamin Magno is promoted to 1LT

- On 8 July 2010, 1LT Magno gets a promotion on the pinnacle of "the painted rocks" out by National Training Center.



### FSC Distro STX Training at NTC



**SGT Williams RVTT training at Ft Richardson**

**SGT Tippett RVTT training at Ft Richardson**

In harsh desert conditions, The National Training Center (NTC) at Fort Irwin, California simulate today's current combat situation in Iraq and Afghanistan. Daytime temperatures soar to 120 degrees F with night time temperatures dropping to the 70s. Due to the climate change, FSC's operations were light the first couple of days to allow Soldiers to become acclimated to desert conditions. Thereafter, during the first week FSC, conducted warrior task training and equipment draw. Weeks two and three consisted of Soldiers conducting numerous convoy operations involving resupply of parts, food, fuel, and escorting personnel.



**SSG Gatto conducting a rock drill at NTC**



**Convoy on return to FOB King at NTC**

FSC's convoy training for the Distro Platoon started with Reconfigurable Virtual Tactical Trainer (RVTT). Throughout the rotation, the Distro Platoon successfully completed 11 convoys over harsh desert trails consisting of over 500 miles. During the numerous convoys, SSG Gatto conducted rock drills in order to demonstrate different vehicle formations dependent on combat scenarios. One exercise involved conducting live-fire convoy training in simulated combat situations. On the convoy returning from the live-fire exercise, SPC Vest and SPC Tinsley spotted a small IED in the middle of the road and halted the convoy.



## From the Commander:

Taking Soldiers from the coolest to the hottest environment in the United States was a foreseeable challenge, but how the Soldiers from FSC responded has spoken volumes of the quality and character of Soldiers we have on our team. According to FM 6-22, “maintaining order in chaos” is the leader’s role in our Army, and FSC did exactly that for the 6<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion. FSC Soldiers maintained order on FOB King and across the National Training Center with vital life and mission sustaining supplies from 9-24 July 2010. When mission critical equipment failed, our maintenance platoon safely moved through the battlefield to recover, repair and return them to duty. When the concept of support failed, our distribution platoon pushed and pulled important life sustaining parts, fuel, food, and ammunition across a battlefield—scattered with IEDs, mines and terrorists.

The training experience at Fort Irwin showed every Soldier things we are doing well and things we need to work on. Our continued pursuit on improvement will build confidence that will sustain our team when the 6<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion is called to deploy in support of Overseas Contingency Operations. The sacrifices our Soldiers and families made in the month of July will pay immense dividends in the near future as we continue to train for a future deployment.

Soldiers, take pride in your work, you performed well together. To the families, your sacrifice this July allowed the unit to focus on a realistic deployment scenario that has greatly enhanced unit readiness. When the 6<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion deploys, FSC will be better trained and prepared because of the sacrifices you made this July.

CPT Kurtis Schaaf  
FSC  
Commanding



## 84th ESC (Airborne)

The day the 84th Engineer Support Company (Airborne) left Fort Richardson, AK the temperature was 55 degrees Fahrenheit and cloudy. By the time the unit arrived to the Rotational Unit Bivouac Area (RUBA) on Fort Irwin, CA, the temperature was 99 degrees Fahrenheit without a single cloud in the sky. Once we got off the bus, we knew we were in for something special when we felt the heat blast us in the face and the welcoming party told us that we were lucky - we arrived on a cool day. However, that did not deter the Arctic paratroopers as we began to move into our sleeping tent to begin the initial week of preparation before heading into the "box" for maneuvers.

The first week at the National Training Center (NTC) is spent at the RUBA, drawing required vehicles and equipment and acclimatizing to the ever present heat. This week was also a time that some of the old salts in the unit managed to track down and reconnect with old friends serving in the 1st Heavy Brigade Combat Team of the 1st Infantry Division (1/1 HBCT) from Fort Riley, KS. We were successful in drawing vehicles and equipment, but acclimatizing to the heat proved a little difficult when we saw a fellow USARAK Soldier missing his binky bear patch. Several of us speculated that his patch had melted in the heat, but to our great relief, he apparently forgot to put on his unit patch when he changed uniforms. Also during the first week, SPC Patricia Lara, our Chemical Specialist and de facto Operations Clerk, reenlisted for another three years at Fort Bragg, NC at the top of NTC's painted rock pile. As the first week drew to a close, we packed our equipment, loaded our trailers, donned our kit, and prepared for combat operations in the "box."

We moved from the RUBA to FOB King on 9 July 2010. Once we moved to the "box," the units progressed through two phases. The first phase, lasting one week, is spent running lanes to train and smooth out our operations, culminating in a blank fire exercise to recover a downed pilot from a simulated Iraqi town. The next phase, lasting one week, is when full spectrum operations began. During the second week (second phase in the "box"), the Company was split up with 3rd platoon going to 34th Sapper Company (from Schofield Barracks, Hawaii) to employ route clearance equipment. The cutthroats were so effective that they found a live 60mm mortar to clear. 2nd platoon, Predators, along with 3rd platoon of 34th Sapper Company headed to FOB Miami to improve about 5 miles of sandy road. Because of the fine work that the Predators performed there is a rumor that the road is going to be turned into a four lane highway from Fort Irwin to Las Vegas. 1st platoon, the Shockers, stayed at FOB King as a route sanitation asset whose efforts greatly improved the mobility of the 3rd MEB and 1/1 HBCT and significantly increased the ability of patrols to locate IEDs along supply routes. After two weeks, a few firefights, and a smattering of indirect fire, the 84th ESC (ABN) completed operations and headed back to the RUBA.

CPT Daniel Fox  
84th ESC  
Commanding

### Blank Fire STX Lane





# 56th Engineer Company

During July 56<sup>th</sup> Engineer Company (Vikings) were hard at work. Here in Alaska, summer means “Troop Construction Season” and we have been maximizing the opportunity to build. The focus of this month’s construction efforts have been on facilities for future training for our Soldiers, from our own Engineer Skills Training Area (ESTA) to a training support facility that will benefit all of the units on Fort Richardson.

1<sup>st</sup> Platoon has been focused on completing five buildings at the ESTA here on Fort Richardson. These buildings were designed to provide facilities for our Soldiers to continue to hone and refine their Military Occupation Skills (MOS) during the winter months when it is not feasible to construct. The buildings will offer our Soldiers the ability to train on carpentry, masonry, electrician, and plumbing skills and provide ready-to-go classrooms for instruction. Four of the five buildings are in the touch up phase and the final building is scheduled to be finished by mid- August.

2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon has continued to set the conditions for future training within the Battalion. Four members of the platoon traveled to Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area to conduct an engineer reconnaissance on troop construction projects that will take place this August and October. In addition, the platoon has begun work to prepare the Engineer Skills Training Area for the construction of a new Bailey Bridge Training Site. The platoon has organized and moved thousands of pounds of equipment and material to make way for the new site.

3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon began the construction of a classroom/storage facility for Range Control here at Fort Richardson. This facility will provide storage for Improvised Explosive Device (IED) training aids and equipment. The structure will serve double duty and provide a classroom for all the Soldiers on Fort Richardson to receive classes on how to operate the equipment used to keep the Soldiers safe from IED’s. 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon will finish out the month preparing to deploy to Fort Greely, AK, to complete the first of two construction phases at Donnelly Training Area.

Enhancing our construction capabilities, the Company received new equipment training and fielded our three brand new backhoe loaders. These great pieces of equipment are already making an impact on our construction and support capabilities. A team from 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon used the backhoe loader to dig a 500 meter trench at the ESTA. The trench will carry communications lines into the ESTA and will provide the Battalion with permanent communications capabilities for future training exercises.

Along with our construction focus, the Vikings have also been busy supporting the installation. A group of our Soldiers has volunteered to participate in a partnership and mentoring program with the Anchorage Public School System. As the month draws to a close, we will be supporting the Arctic Thunder Air Show by providing a static display of Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) vehicles.

CPT Melbourne Arledge Jr  
56th Engineer Company  
Commanding



# 34th Engineer Company (Sapper)

## From the Commander:

Greetings to all of the Titan family members, friends, relatives, and keikis. The month of July has gone by fast and furious here at the National Training Center (NTC) in Fort Irwin, California. The Soldiers from 34<sup>th</sup> Sapper Company have spent months preparing and training for this mission rehearsal exercise to prepare us for Iraq. The NTC is geared upon validating Soldiers' home station training and preparing them for their wartime mission. Our Titan Sappers did an excellent job over the 27 day exercise preparing men and equipment for missions, hunting and defeating Improvised Explosive Devices (IED), reacting to the enemy, and conducting horizontal construction projects.

Upon arrival, during Reception- Staging- and Onward Integration (RSOI), Titan Soldiers were given blocks of classroom instruction on warrior tasks they would execute in combat; such as flying the Raven, tactically question, search suspected insurgents, and how to collect biometric data used by IED emplacements. After our classes were complete, we staged and deployed to "The Box", a simulated Iraqi environment that gets Soldiers prepared to living life on a Forward Operating Base. We then conducted Situational Training Exercises (STX) during day and night, which were designed to test a platoon on collective tasks they would be expected to perform every day in Iraq. A few highlights from the STX include Titan Soldiers conducting route clearance lanes designed to find IEDs, a Trauma Lane geared to prepare us on dealing with mass casualties in an urban environment, and clearing a city of insurgents at night. IT WAS INTENSE! After a week of STX lanes, we culminated with a live fire exercise. We were recognized as one of the units who came prepared to NTC, having already completed a live fire range, we were head and shoulders above the other units here and it showed in our ability to control live fires in a shoot house.

After STX, we entered Full Spectrum Operations, where mentoring from our combat trainers was complete and Soldiers were expected to "run" and execute operations. 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon was sent to FOB Miami, where they executed horizontal construction missions. They improved 10 km of road in three days and as 1LT Wyatt put it, "Pushed more dirt than E! True Hollywood Stories." Both 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoons stayed and conducted Route Clearance missions from FOB King.

Some Soldiers have distinguished themselves during this NTC Rotation. First, our medics, SGT Kenney and PFC Murphey, saved an elderly woman's life on the plane from Hawaii to California. The elderly woman was showing symptoms of going into cardiac arrest and SGT Kenney and PFC Murphey sprung into action providing oxygen and acute care until landing in LAX. On another note, PFC Clark from 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon was recognized by the Battalion Command Sergeant Major during his performance during the STX. PFC Clark was supervising in the medical evacuation of his platoon, acting in a role three levels above his pay grade. SPC Bennett and SPC Ryder were recognized as "Heroes of the Battle," Soldiers recognized for the achievement during particular phases of NTC. Finally, PFC Hendrix, from 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon, stepped into a team leader position during the Urban Live Fire Exercise, controlling three other Soldiers' fires, displaying a level of leadership and maturity years ahead of his peers.

We look forward to seeing you all soon but before we get back on the plane to Schofield Barracks, we must go through the Regeneration (REGEN) period, a phase of NTC designed to return the equipment we used to the same standard we received it or better. Finally, on a personal note, we have a new Titan addition to our Sapper family. Congratulations to SPC Sean Humbertson, and his wife Candie, on giving birth to their first baby girl! Aloha, we will see you soon. The FRG will post our return times when we lock them in.

CPT Keith Muehling  
34<sup>th</sup> Sapper Company  
Commanding

## Missions at NTC





## 59th MAC

This is Bushwacker 6 coming to you from The National Training Center (NTC) located in Fort Irwin, California. I wanted to take a moment to share our training with you. NTC is the last major training event for the Bushwackers prior to our deployment. It is designed to test everything in the unit, from the individual Soldier, to the Company as a whole. It also provides a gauge to leaders at all levels on the training and readiness status of our Company. For 59th MAC, NTC has come in four phases, Preparation, Situational Training Exercises (STX), Full Spectrum Operations (FSO), and Recovery.

**Preparation:** The preparation phase began at Fort Hood with Company training events followed by the packing and shipping of unit equipment. Once at Fort Irwin, we seized the opportunities offered



by NTC in the form of additional training and equipment, all of which helped prepare us for deployment.

### **Situational Training Exercise (STX)**

This phase consisted of training events focused at the Platoon level. It was an excellent opportunity to test each Platoon's ability to react to specific battlefield events down a lane. I am proud of the effort and execution of each lane by all Platoons.

**Full Spectrum Operation (FSO):** This

is the phase in which the Company is tested as whole. We learned more than I ever thought possible. We were sharpened and prepared for war.

**Recovery:** Though just beginning, this will set the stage for our future operations. I expect great things. Your Soldiers have done excellent!

Bushwackers! Show No Mercy!

- CPT Timothy Butler

## Successes on the Battlefield!

### **Preparation:**

